

## [Clayborn Brimhall]

1

Simpson, Mrs. [B.T.F. ?]

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CLAYBORN BRIMHALL [?]

CLAYBORN BRIMHALL was born in Idaho, in 1866, and with his Mother, came to Fruitland, New Mexico, in The spring of 1876, in a large covered wagon, drawn by four horses, and having aboard a thousand pounds of flour and enough provisions to last them for several months. Though a lad of only ten years, Mr. Brimhall remembers this journey distinctly, as he is, to-day a well preserved man, being very fit both mentally and physically, and of such a kindly disposition he lives in a world of friends. He says they traveled from the small town of Oxford, Idaho, down the Utah Valley to Salina, up the Salina Canyon to what is now Price City, and there turned south and east, crossed Green River, came to [?], [?], Utah, crossed Grand River and travelled to Montecello, Utah, then to San Juan River which they forded and found themselves in the tiny settlement of Fruitland, N. M.

They had seen no white people on the way except in settlements, but the Indians were friendly to them, fortunately. At this time there was no [town?] of Farmington. No town at Durango, Colorado, which is to-day our nearest town of five or six thousand inhabitants.

And Fruitland consisted of a long low ell shaped building, made of adobe and of poles, which stood up-right in a trench, which formed the walls of many a pioneer house, and one or two log-houses, one of which is still standing, [and?] belonged to Mr. Walter Stevens.

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Here they found an abundance [?] of tall grass. The grass and the timber extended to the rivers edge on both sides, in great contrast to the condition to-day, for to-day there is no grass or timber near the river, no, nor ever a sign that there ever was any at the rivers edge, the result of years of over-grazing which the U.S. Government is now trying [sohard?] to over come, and to bring back restore to this district its original [?]. Mr. Brimhall remembers many ponds and "riffles" in the neighborhood, none of which remain to-day.

In the spring of '79-80 a number of new families were arrived [?] in Fruitland, they built an irrigating ditch; they soon had a thriving settlement and raised good crops. [Therewas?] not an arroya to be seen. Now there are hundreds.

2

Later he went, with his Mother, to the southern part of this state, and at twenty years of age, he married Evangaline and returned to Fruitland to live permanently. He was always a lover of Fruitland. The years spent here in that early day brought him in constant contact with the Navajo Indians some of whom became his friends. Between him and the well known Navajo Indian, " [?] [?] there was a real bond and the tie was never broken. He says "[Coatie?] was smart." ————"He was smart. He listened to you, and you could reason with him. "Though [?] was short and stout, he was outstanding and always commanded your admiration, and whether his mood was ugly or kindly, he managed to handle the situation [adriotly?].

On one occasion Mr. Brimhalls skillful handling of a delicate situation prevented trouble in Fruitland. This occurred one cold winter night, when [?], who was a priveladge character, had discovered an open barrel with wine in it. The wine was frozen, except the very center, to which [?] helped himself, freely, and, shortly, the effects of it showed on [?], freely. While he was still able to navagate, he wandered into a [dance?] which was in progress in Fruitland. His unsteady step was very evident, so some of the men gently requested him to leave the hall, as many of the women were getting so nervous that they began leaving, mostly through the windows. Of course he [refusedand?] when the request was

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repeated, he drew his ever ready knife from his belt, and told them if they let him alone, he would do the same, but if not he would kill them. At this they thought it best to call a halt, while a couple of men slipped in the door behind him to get near enough to hold down his arms while the other men disarmed him. But Clayborn Brimhall, then a deputy sheriff, stepped up in front of [?], motioned to the men to go back, and persuaded [?] to leave nicely, saying to [?] that he, Brimhall "[wasa?] Washington man". Upon being convinced that Brimhall really was a "Washington man" and had authority, he was willing to yeild to it. [?] was one of the very few Indians who seemed to be able to grasp the idea of the authority of the law and then submit willingly.

The Indians were constantly breaking the law of the white man, and one day the sheriff caught [?C] 3 Costiana in a small cattle theft or about to make one. The sheriff "had the drop" on him, and told him what to do or he would shoot him, [???], among other things he was made to crawl on the ground. Costiana did it, as usual recognizing the authority of the law. However, he had another no-so-good-trait, he would "get even", and not so long after that, he "got-the-drop" on the sheriff, and, in great glee, he made the sheriff crawl on the ground. How-ever, he and the sheriff were good friends to the very last, for at Costiana's death the same sheriff, himself, took a coffin down to the reservation [?] in which Costiana was laid, and is today taking his last, long sleep.

"Costiana" spoke four languages, English, Spanish Navajo and Apache.———Mr Brimhall well remembers the time that a company of soldiers were stationed at Fruitland in

The trouble started when in building a house for a man named Welch one of the laborers got into an argument with an Indian and the Indians arm was broken and it [?] the trouble which occurred after . there [???] shot. Very shortly after this a small Indian boy of some twelve or fourteen years left his hogan and went to Fruitland. He, without saying anything to his family, remained there for two or three days, and the word was passed around among the Indians that the boy had been killed by the whites in retaliation for the death of the man who had been shot. But the boy returned to his hogan, unhurt, later.

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The residents of Fruitland were surrounded by over a thousand [Indiansin?] a day or so and the Troops were called out to protect them. They camped there for something like a month.

When it was thought best to call out the troops, a message was sent to the telegraph office in Durango, Colorado, fifty miles [?] away, which was to be wired to Fort Defiance; these men Silas Hinaker and Bupe Naupin were driving a team of horses, and of course [?????] to travel to Durango. After they left, Indians began gathering [????] threatening groups, the groups growing larger all the time, till it was estimated there was more that a thousand in Indians surrounding the settlement; this was alarming, to say the least, and at a meet of some of the men it was thought to sent a man on horse-back across country by a shorter route would a better plan, and quicker. But, who to send? It was

4

The time was one o'clock in the morning, and but few men were inclined to leave at that [hourof?] the night on such an errand, and to face a band of Indians who were all worked up and ready to fight at any moment. But they decided to ask Clayborn Brimhall to do it, and offered him \$60.00 if he reached Durango in five hours. Clayborn accepted the offer. He drank a cup of coffee whiel his brother-in-law saddled his horse and was off. He made the trip within the prescribed time, bringing back "his time" from the telegraph operator, and the troops were arrived at Fruitland before any outbreak occurred.

The Indian who shot the man named Walch was called "The Fat Man", was [?] a trial and sentenced to the [pennitea?] for twenty years, and sent to Santa Fe to serve out the term. But he Broke out and escaped from the pen They put Blood-hounds on his track. They found him in a tree where he had fortified himself with stones, and he beat the hounds donw with stones and escaped and was never re-captured, and is living to-day not far from Shiprock. But he is not now known by the name of "Fat Man".

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Mr Brimhall is a public spirited man and one who stands very high in his community. He is liberal and [progressiveand?] is such a man as benefits a community by his enterprise and pluck. Source of information.

Personal interview with Mr. Clayborn Brimhall